

RED DRUM

(06/06 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status - *Recovering* - Current regulations are designed to divert overfishing on juvenile fish, while adult spawning stock is protected by prohibiting harvest of red drum greater than 27 inches total length (TL).

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1996-2005 – 160,846 lbs./\$175,958

2005 Commercial Landings and Value – 128,770 lbs./\$173,040

Average Recreational Landings 1996-2005 – 226,286 lbs., **2005** - 237,422 lbs.

Average Number of Award Citations (40-inch release only) 1996-2005 – 1,058, **2005** - 1,520

Average Recreational Commercial Gear License (RCGL) Landings 2002-2005 – 7,194 lbs., **2005** - 8,089 lbs.

Status of Fishery Management Plan (FMP) - A new stock assessment, as well as, an update of the 2001 NC FMP is under development. The most recent stock assessment (1999) showed improved recruitment of juveniles to the adult population over the prior study period (1995), but still indicated the stock was undergoing overfishing. Emergency management measures implemented by North Carolina in 1998 and approved as part of the NC FMP in March 2001, made necessary changes to help prevent overfishing on the state's red drum stocks. Most recently, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) updated the federal red drum FMP through Amendment 2 (June 2002). This plan requires that each state implement management measures to divert overfishing. As a result of the proactive steps taken by North Carolina under the state FMP, no new management measures were necessary under Amendment 2. The South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council (SAFMC) continues to divert overfishing on the Atlantic Coast by preventing the harvest of red drum in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

Data/Research Needs - Estimates of discard mortality from commercial and recreational fisheries, fisheries independent data on recruitment of juvenile fish to adults, assessment of adult stocks, estimates of fecundity for females, and validation of juvenile abundance indices.

Current Regulations (2006) – 18 inches total length (TL) minimum and 27 inches TL maximum for recreational and commercial fishermen. 1 fish per day for recreational anglers. Daily commercial trip limit for commercial fishing operations is 7-fish per day and at least 50% of the catch by weight must be edible finfish other than red drum. The commercial fishing season is monitored from September 1 to August 31 with a 250,000-lb. cap. No possession of fish greater than 27 inches TL.

Harvest Season - year round

Size and Age at Maturity – 30-32 inches/3-4 years

Historical and Current Maximum Age - 62 years

Juvenile Abundance Index 1996-2005 – 5, **2005** - 9

Habits/Habitats - Red drum are estuarine dependent members of the drum family that includes Atlantic croaker, spot, black drum, weakfish, and spotted sea trout. Large red drum (up to 90 lbs.) inhabit the coastal waters of North Carolina throughout the year, often observed in the surf during the spring and fall seasons and commonly found in the Pamlico Sound during the summer months. Spawning takes place in the fall around coastal inlets. Larval and juvenile drum utilize various shallow estuarine habitats in coastal sounds and rivers during the first few years of life. Upon maturity, red drum move out of the estuaries to join the adult spawning stock in the ocean.

For more information, see [DMF Species Leads page](#)